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SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

March 14, 2004

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 721 - UNKNOWN)  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ECON  
Captions: None  
Subject: SCENESETTER FOR A/S BURNS' VISIT TO THE UAE, MARCH 21  
Ref: None

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S E C R E T ABU DHABI 00721

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: RSO AMB DCM P/M ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA  
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY  
CLEARED: DCM:RAALBRIGHT ECON:OJOHN CG:JDAVIS

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
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INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3842  
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0158  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP/DSCA-MEAN/ISA-NESA//  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 000721

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO, INR/NESA AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2014  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR A/S BURNS' VISIT TO THE UAE,  
MARCH 21

Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba, reasons  
1.5 (b) and (d)

Ref: (A) Abu Dhabi 629, (B) Abu Dhabi 571

1. (C) Summary: Assistant Secretary Burns: I look forward to welcoming you back to the UAE for your March 21 visit for the second U.S.-UAE Bilateral Strategic Partnership meeting. Your Emirati

interlocutors also are eager to see you. We have requested meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Shaykh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Abu Dhabi Deputy Crown Prince and UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff Shaykh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In addition, we are proposing a brief interview for you with Abu Dhabi TV, time permitting.

12. (C) Summary continued: Your discussions with the Emirati leadership will revolve around the major current topics Iraq, Middle East peace talks, Afghanistan, Iran, Libya, and the new Greater Middle East initiative. You will want to thank them for their assistance to Iraq, including their \$215 million pledge for Iraq's reconstruction, for successfully hosting the follow-up donors conference on February 28-29, and for their commitment to forgive most of Iraq's \$7 billion bilateral debt. You should make a point of emphasizing to Shaykh Hamdan and Shaykh Mohammed the value we place in counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation cooperation. A/S Wolf had fruitful discussions with Shaykh Hamdan March 13 and with Mohammed bin Rashid March 14 concerning the A.Q. Khan investigation. Finally, you will want to underscore the important strides the U.S. and the UAE have taken in solidifying our Strategic Partnership, the fruits of which include an Article 98 agreement, a TIFA agreement, and a robust Export Controls action plan. Your schedule will allow for a tour of the new Embassy compound, "The Dunes," which we occupied on February 7 and dedicated, with Shaykh Hamdan as our guest of honor, on March 2. End summary.

13. (S) We propose that you touch on the following key issues:

- Provide a readout of the recent developments in Iraq, including the new charter and the timetable for political transition, as well as a review of efforts to keep the Middle East peace talks on track;

- Be prepared to explain the Greater Middle East concept and the Administration's support for reform in the region;

- Explain the President's nonproliferation initiative and the role countries like the UAE can play; express appreciation for UAE cooperation on the A.Q. Khan investigation and urge the UAE to tighten its export control regime so that others don't take advantage of it;

- Discuss our role in keeping pressure on Iran to prevent it from developing a nuclear weapons capability;

- Brief the UAE on the state of U.S.-Libya relations following Libya's disclosure that it would cease its nuclear weapons program;

- Emphasize our commitment to institutionalizing our bilateral relationship through our Strategic Partnership, and by holding the first JMC in Abu Dhabi on May 1-2;

- Express thanks for UAEG cooperation on achieving a bilateral ICC Article 98 agreement and a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, and on agreeing to host a hawala conference in April.

- Thank the Emiratis for their tremendous humanitarian assistance throughout the Middle East, and for successfully hosting the Iraq donors' follow-up conference Feb. 28-29;

- With Shaykh Mohammed Bin Zayed (MBZ), congratulate him on his promotion last November to Deputy Crown

Prince of Abu Dhabi, which we view as a sound decision that has resolved leadership succession questions for the foreseeable future;

#### Iraq: Contributor to stabilization and reconstruction

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¶4. (C) Iraq remains high on the Emiratis' agenda. A member of the Iraq Core Donors Group, the UAE has pledged \$215 million in financial assistance toward Iraq's reconstruction. In February, Abu Dhabi hosted a follow-up meeting for the October 2 and 3 Madrid Donors' Conference on Iraq, focusing on the operation and funding of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq. The UAE also committed to forgive most of Iraq's \$7 billion bilateral debt.

#### Middle East peace: Support for our engagement

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¶5. (C) The Arab-Israeli conflict is the other high-priority agenda item for the Emiratis (see ref A). The Emiratis want us to stay engaged, but they perceive that we are occupied by other crises. There is concern over the continuing construction of the wall and deterioration of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza.

#### UAE one of the largest donors to Palestinians

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¶6. (C) The UAEG has maintained a robust assistance package to the Palestinians. With \$87 million in project and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza since September 2000, the UAE has been a major Arab donor to the Palestinians. The efforts are carefully monitored and very much support our strategy to ensure that funds do not fall into the wrong hands. In addition to the government aid, private donations of ruling family members to the Palestinians certainly total tens of millions of dollars. At the request of his father, HBZ recently directed the RCA to help finance repairs of the Dome of the Rock mosque.

#### Iran: Tension persists, but Bam quake aid appreciated

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¶7. (C) Relations between the UAE and Iran remain strained after the effort to reach some compromise on the Abu Musa island issue came to a near halt in late spring/early summer of 2003. The Emiratis have made clear to us that they are deeply suspicious of Iran's territorial/military ambitions in the Gulf, particularly with respect to Tehran's nuclear and WMD acquisition policy. The Emiratis also remain worried about Iranian designs in Iraq. In the immediate aftermath of the Bam earthquake it was Shaykh Zayed who ordered planes be sent to Iran to deliver 30 tons of relief supplies, making the UAE the first in the Arab region to arrive in Iran. Iran appreciated the UAE's swift response, which was overseen by HBZ, the UAE Red Crescent Authority chairman.

#### Afghanistan: UAE aid exceeds \$150 million

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¶8. (S) The UAE continues to play a very helpful role in Afghanistan, particularly in the provision of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. The UAE Armed Forces has deployed an Emirati Special Operations contingent to Bagram Air Base to work side-by-side with U.S. forces. UAE humanitarian and military programs in Afghanistan are ongoing, and we expect the final price tag to far exceed the \$150 million already spent.

Successes: Article 98, TIFA, MEPI, Export Controls

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¶9. (C) Our Strategic Partnership deliverable is the March 15 TIFA signing in Washington. Minister of State for Financial and Industrial Affairs Mohammed Khalfan Bin Kharbash is leading the UAE side, accompanied by MFA Assistant U/S for Political Affairs Abdullah Rashid. They have a robust schedule of meetings in Washington, including Ambassador Zoellick, OPIC Executive VP Ross Connelly, U/S of Defense Dov Zakheim, EB A/S Wayne, and members of Congress. The UAE deliverable was the Article 98 Agreement. The Article 98 agreement went into force on February 15, and is our 82nd such agreement. Other recent accomplishments to be highlighted are the implementation of our Export Controls Action Plan, and solid UAE participation at a number of MEPI regional programs, including the Judicial Forum in Bahrain, the Women and the Law seminar in Amman, and the Campaign School in Doha. The MLAT text is with the UAE side and there is still work to be done.

Domestic considerations: Shaykh Zayed and succession

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¶10. (C) Since your last visit to the UAE in October, the domestic political situation has stayed about the same. President Zayed's role in the day-to-day affairs of the state continues to diminish, although we continue to see photographs of him meeting with heads of state (Hosni Mubarak was here on February 18) and leaders of the other emirates. We believe his sons shield him from situations where he may be embarrassed by a failure of memory or loss of train of thought. His sons have taken over the substantive day-to-day operation of all the major portfolios of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and key ministries. That said, we continue to hear evidence that he is "consulted" on major issues that are likely to come to his attention or require his approval to gain support from other quarters.

Democracy, human rights and TIP

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¶11. (C) You will want to explain the concept of a Greater Middle East (GME). The UAEG has refrained from public comment on GME, although the media has stated that the US should not seek to impose reform from the outside.

¶12. (C) On TIP, the UAE has made great strides on controlling the problem of underage camel jockeys. The next challenge for the UAE will be the problem of trafficking in women. There are some differences in the way our two countries define the problem and discussions G/TIP Coordinator Mark Taylor had in mid-February with law enforcement officials provided the opportunity for our side to clarify some of these issues. We hope to see more active involvement from the UAE law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting the traffickers. HBZ took this on board and said that combating trafficking in women was the UAEG's priority as well because it is detrimental to UAE society and its reputation. We have discussed a short-term action plan with the UAEG that would enable them to take concrete steps against this traffic, and we believe a drop to Tier 2 in the next TIP report before they have sufficient time to make some significant progress would hurt HBZ's standing, given the political capital he spent on the camel jockey issue.

New Embassy Compound

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¶13. (U) We opened for business in our new Embassy in Abu Dhabi's Diplomatic Quarter on February 7. Shaykh

Hamdan was our guest of honor at the March 2 dedication ceremony, along with a substantial delegation of shaykhs, ministers and business leaders (see ref B). We look forward to showing you the new compound. Our immediate neighbors include the KSA, India, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Yemen, and Pakistan.

Dubai Crown Prince  
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¶14. (S) Your schedule prohibits a meeting with UAE Minister of Defense and Dubai Crown Prince Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MbR). Like most of our senior UAE interlocutors, MbR was caught off-guard by the President's NDU speech implicating Dubai in AQ Khan's vast proliferation network. The Emiratis would have appreciated prior consultation on this issue and public acknowledgment of the UAE's excellent cooperation with the United States on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation matters. During a March 13-14 visit to the UAE, Assistant Secretary Wolf provided senior UAEG officials with additional information on companies and residents in Dubai that support the Khan network. MbR in particular noted that these individuals have taken advantage of the openness and hospitality of Dubai, and undertook to commit significant resources to investigating and shutting down elements of AQ Khan's network here. In December, we launched the first two in a series of export control and related border security programs (EXBS) designed to help the UAEG develop an effective export controls and trade monitoring regime. The December EXBS programs already have resulted in a draft export controls law that we hope the UAEG will promulgate by mid-2004; this law will become the basis for the next EXBS course (scheduled for late-April) to develop specific control lists of goods that will require declaration and registration to transit the UAE.

¶15. (U) This cable was coordinated with AmConsul Dubai.

Minimize considered.

WAHBA